

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DACCA 05812 121143Z

53

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2662

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 5812

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, BG, IN, US

SUBJECT: ADMIRAL KHAN'S CURRENT VIEWS ON FARAKKA

REF: DACCA ;5788 (NOTAL)

1. REAR ADMIRAL M.H. KHAN, DEPUTY CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR, SPENT A LARGE PORTION OF THE TIME DURING MY COURTESY CALL TODAY (NOVEMBER 12) DISCUSSING FARAKKA. KHAN'S PRESENTATION WAS MODERATE AND LOW-KEYED, BUT THERE WAS NO QUESTION THAT HE AND OTHERS IN THE BDG FEEL THAT, FOR ECONOMIC AS WELL AS DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS, THEY NEED SOMEHOW TO BREAK THE CURRENT IMPASSE ON THIS ISSUE.

2. LEADING OFF, KHAN SAID THAT CAREFUL STUDIES BY THE BDG SHOW THAT WATER FLOW ON THE GANGES AT HARDINGE BRIDGE (JUST INSIDE THE BANGLADESH BORDER) IS THE LOWEST FOR THIS TIME OF THE YEAR AT ANY TIME SINCE THEY BEGAN COLLECTING DATA. THE SITUATION LAST YEAR WAS SERIOUS, KHAN SAID, BUT THE FLOW DURING THE CURRENT DRY SEASON HAS BEEN REDUCED EVEN FURTHER. INDIA, KHAN SAID, TALKS ABOUT A FIFTY-FIFTY SHARING OF THE WATERS. WHILE THIS MIGHT BE SATISFACTORY DURING CERTAIN MONTHS OF THE YEAR, IT WOULD BE TOTALLY INADEQUATE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DACCA 05812 121143Z

DURING THE DRY SEASON AND WOULD NOT PROVIDE ADEQUATE WATER

FOR IRRIGATION OR FOR PREVENTING INCREASED SALINITY IN CERTAIN IMPORTANT AREAS.

3. KHAN SAID BANGLADESH HAS MADE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS TO REACH A BILATERAL SOLUTION WITH INDIA. THESE HAVE FAILED BECAUSE OF A LACK OF RESPONSIVENESS FROM NEW DELHI. AS A RESULT, BANGLADESH SEES NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO PUSH ON STRONGLY WITH EFFORTS TO INTERNATIONALIZE THE DISPUTE.

4. ASKED ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR A HELPFUL ROLE BY THE WORLD BANK, KHAN SAID THIS MATTER HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN DETAIL WITH MCNAMARA BUT THAT THIS AGAIN WAS CONTINGENT ON NEW DELHI'S RESPONSE. HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT THE INDIANS WOULD AGREE TO AN EFFECTIVE SHORT-TERM ROLE BY THE WORLD BANK. OVER THE LONGER RUN, HOWEVER, KHAN FELT THAT THE BANK MIGHT HELP RATIONALIZE WATER UTILIZATION IN THE ENTIRE GANGES BASIN. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL WAS AGREEABLE TO THE BANK UNDERTAKING A LONG-TERM STUDY OF THIS PROBLEM. HE HAD NO WORD ON THE INDIAN ATTITUDE FOLLOWING MCNAMARA'S VISIT.

5. THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM, KHAN SAID, IS FOR BANGLADESH TO GET ENOUGH WATER TO MEET ITS REQUIREMENTS DURING THE CURRENT DRY SEASON. OTHERWISE THE NATION'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WILL SUFFER. KHAN SAID FARAKKA IS ALSO A TEST OF THE BASIC RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LARGE AND SMALLER NATIONS AND OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESENT INTERNATIONAL MACHINERY IN PROTECTING SMALLER STATES AND RESOLVING DISPUTES. KHAN SAID HE AND FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HUSAINI WOULD TAKE A MODERATE AND CONSTRUCTIVE STAND IN DISCUSSIONS ON FARAKKA AT NEW YORK, BUT THEY FELT STRONGLY THAT THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE SHOULD AGREE TO AN EFFECTIVE RESOLUTION, INCLUDING SOME FOLLOW-UP MECHANISM, AND NOT A RESOLUTION LIMITED TO PIOUS HOPES FOR COOPERATION WHICH WOULD NOT MATERIALIZE. KHAN ASKED FOR OUR SUPPORT IN ASSURING THAT A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION WAS INDEED ADOPTED.

6. I TOLD KHAN THAT I THOUGHT THERE WAS BROAD UNDERSTANDING IN THE UN OF THE PROBLEM FACED BY BANGLADESH. WE WERE NOT, HOWEVER, IN A POSITION TO EXERT PRESSURE ON INDIA, AND IF WE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DACCA 05812 121143Z

ATTEMPTED TO DO SO THIS PRESSURE WOULD NOT LIKELY BE EFFECTIVE. IF BANGLADESH AND INDIA COULD AGREE ON SOME MACHINERY TO RESOLVE THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM, THEN I SAW NO REASON WHY WE AND OTHERS WOULD NOT SUPPORT IT.

7. ADMIRAL KHAN LEAVES DACCA TONIGHT FOR NEW YORK. HE AND THE FOREIGN SECRETARY WILL ARRIVE IN NEW YORK SOMETIME MONDAY. KHAN VERY MUCH HOPES TO SEE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE

U.S. DELEGATION IN ORDER TO PRESENT TO TEM THE STATISTICAL
DATA HE WILL BE CARRYING WITH HIM.
MASTERS

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